



THE COURTSHIP OF  
MILES STANDISH

LONGFELLOW



Compliments of  
Mr and Mrs McLord









PRISCILLA

THE COURTSHIP  
OF  
MILES STANDISH

*By*  
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



PRINTED FOR THE PUBLISHERS

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# THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW  
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DESIGNS  
BY BOUGHTON, MERRILL, REINHART  
PERKINS, HITCHCOCK, SHAP-  
LEIGH, AND OTHERS



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*The Half-Titles and Tail-Pieces were drawn by* CHARLES COPELAND *and* S. L. SMITH.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

MR. LONGFELLOW'S *Evangeline* was published in 1847, and the discussion which his use of hexameters aroused was renewed repeatedly in the following years. His next important poetical work was *The Golden Legend*, published in 1851, and he was still brooding over the full conception of *Christus* when his reading of the Finnish epic *Kalevala* gave impulse to a desire he had long had to weave the Indian legends into a connected poem. The result was *Hiawatha*, at which he worked with great enthusiasm ; not only because the theme interested him, but because he felt the exhilaration of release from daily academic duties, his resignation of his professorship having taken place in 1854. *Hiawatha* appeared in 1855, and then his mind reverted to *Christus*, and he began to consider the subjects which afterward took form in *The New England Tragedies*. Possibly the sombre character of the material he was working in caused a reaction, and led him to look about for a subject of a lighter cast,

## Introductory Note

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but in the same general vein. At any rate, he notes in his diary, under the date of December 2, 1856: "In the evening, wrote the first scene in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*."

There is no evidence that he ever completed this dramatic representation of the subject. He went back in a few days to his Puritans and Quakers, and during the next few weeks was reading books which bore on this subject. But in March he struck upon Charles Wyllis Elliott's *The New England History*, then just issued, which he characterizes as "done cleverly, with a light hand, but depth of research enough," and the next day the desire returned to him to produce some comedy drawn from early New England life. He seems to have continued, however, to work fitfully at *The New England Tragedies*, and by the end of August had made a rough draft of *Wenlock Christison*, the title which he gave to the first form of *John Endicott*.

Exactly a year after he wrote the first scene in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, on the second of December, 1857, we find this entry in his diary: "Soft as spring. I begin a new poem, *Priscilla*, to be a kind of Puritan pastoral; the subject, the courtship of Miles



## *Introductory Note*

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Standish. This, I think, will be a better treatment of the subject than the dramatic one I wrote some time ago ;” and the next day : “My poem is in hexameters ; an idyl of the Old Colony times. What it will turn out I do not know ; but it gives me pleasure to write it ; and that I count for something.” It is not unlikely that the change of name was due in part to the impression made upon him not long before by a Quakeress from England, Priscilla Green, whom he heard speak at a public meeting. “She spoke,” he says, “with a sweet voice and a very clear enunciation ; very deliberately, and breaking now and then into a rhythmic chant, in which the voice seemed floating up and down on wings. I was much interested, and could have listened an hour longer. It was a very great pleasure to hear such a musical voice.” The identity of the name with the historic one of his heroine may easily have served to transfer something of the personality of the living woman into the poet’s fancy of the Puritan maiden when he came to resume his treatment of the subject of Miles Standish’s courtship.

The pages of his diary, and extracts from his correspondence, give glimpses of the poet

## Introductory Note

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at work on his poem, and afterwards enjoying the reception which it had at the hands of the public.

"December 29, 1857. Work a little at *Priscilla*. Toward evening, walk in a gently falling snow, under the shaded lamp of the moon.

"January 29, 1858. Began again on *Priscilla* and wrote several pages, finishing the second canto.

"February 17. Have worked pretty steadily for the last week on *Priscilla*. To-day finish canto four.

"March 1. Keep indoors, and work on *Priscilla*, which I think I shall call *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. But not feeling much in the mood, took to reading Homer; the death of Hector, and Priam's visit to Achilles in his tent.

"March 16. Rowse resumes portrait. But I find time, notwithstanding, to write a whole canto of *Miles Standish*, namely, canto eight.

"March 22. The poem is finished, and now only needs revision, which I begin to-day. But, in the main, I have it as I want it.

"April 23. Printing *Miles Standish*, and seeing all its defects as it stands before me in type. It is always disagreeable, when the

## Introductory Note

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glow of composition is over, to criticise what one has been in love with. We think it is Rachel, but wake to find it Leah.

"*May 27.* Get all the plate-proofs of *Miles Standish*, and look it over with a keen eye to its defects. It is not pleasant to go over a work in this way.

"*June 3.* [In a letter to Charles Sumner.] And now of more private matters. I have just finished a poem of some length,—an idyl of the Old Colony times; a bunch of Mayflowers from the Plymouth woods.

"*July 10.* [To the same.] I wrote you about my new poem, *Miles Standish*, founded on the well-known adventure of my maternal ancestor, John Alden. The heroine's name is Priscilla; and so you have the chief characters, and the chief incident before you, — taking it for granted that you remember the traditional anecdote. I am now going upon something more important.

"*August 12.* [To the same.] *Miles Standish* will not be out till next month. I get in England one hundred and fifty pounds for the advance sheets; a good round sum for a small book. I hope you will like it.

"*October 7.* Fields comes out to make a new proposition about *Miles Standish*. They

## *Introductory Note*

---

have printed ten thousand copies, and want to print ten thousand more without delay.

"*October 16. The Courtship of Miles Standish* published. At noon Ticknor told me he had sold five thousand in Boston, besides the orders from a distance. He had printed ten thousand, and has another ten thousand in press. Met George Vandenhoff, who reads the poem in public to-night.

"*October 23.* Between these two Saturdays, *Miles Standish* has marched steadily on. Another five thousand are in press; in all, an army of twenty-five thousand, in one week. Fields tells me that in London ten thousand were sold the first day.

"*November 6.* I give a dinner to Ticknor and Fields, the publishers, in honor of the success of *Miles Standish*; the other guests, T. Starr King and Whipple.

"*November 28.* Ehninger has sent me a beautiful illustration of *Miles Standish*. It is the bridal procession going through the Plymouth woods, and is full of feeling."

In this, as in other of his poems, Mr. Longfellow drew his material from near rather than from recondite sources. As intimated above, the incident on which the story of the poem turns was a tradition in his family, and

## *Introductory Note*

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had been freshly brought to notice in Mr. Elliott's *The New England History*. From this book, which aims to reconstruct the interior household life, as well as to record the more public events, of New England, Mr. Longfellow gathered a number of details which give color to the poem. Dr. Alexander Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers* also was at his hand, and Winslow's *Relation*, included in it, furnished him with an explicit narrative of Standish's expedition against the Indians. Between the first projection of the poem and its final form occurred the important publication of Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantations*, with Dr. Charles Deane's *Notes*. The poet did not think it necessary to follow the early Plymouth history with scrupulous regard to chronological sequence, nor was he writing a merely metrical version of the results of antiquarian research. It was sufficient to him to catch the broad features of the colonial life and to reproduce the spirit of the relations existing between Plymouth and the Indians. There is, so to speak, a universal history underlying that which concerns itself with the local affairs of men. It is the business of the historian to record with scrupu-



## *Introductory Note*

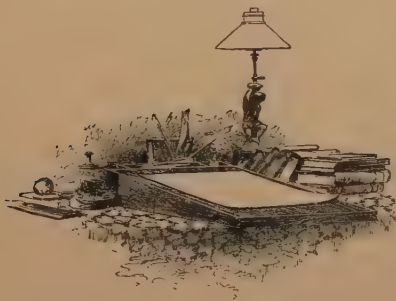
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lous accuracy the acts and circumstances of history, more anxious to furnish all the evidence to be won from documents, monuments, and tradition than to put his own interpretation upon the bearings of this evidence; and yet the historian, unless he be a mere annalist,—and even then he will inevitably select from fuller material in accordance with his own judgment,—is quite sure to impart something of his own rationalizing and generalizing to his record of fact. It is the business of the poet, on the other hand, to be, first of all, an interpreter, to take of the material which the historian furnishes and to disclose its relations to universal experience, its spiritual import, its meaning as read in the light of the history of human nature; and yet, in doing this, the poet finds he cannot stray from the concrete, actual occurrence without introducing an error into his calculations. It is not possible to say how far Mr. Longfellow would have modified his *Evangeline* if he had had access to the historical material now so copious, instead of being shut up to the Abbé Raynal and Halliburton, but it is quite certain that the popular judgment of the deportation of the Acadian is determined by Longfellow, and not

## *Introductory Note*

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by Parkman. There has been no such accession to our knowledge of Plymouth affairs since *The Courtship of Miles Standish* was written, and the historical questions involved in it are the trifles of antiquarianism, but the popular conception of life in the Old Colony, in the early years, may be said to follow, in some measure, upon this poem, though in writing it Mr. Longfellow played variations upon a familiar theme rather than composed a new melody. Those who are curious to note the superficial discrepancies between the narrative contained in this poem and that which has been sifted by scholars from contemporaneous documents, will find suggestions in the notes which are appended to this volume, and which relate chiefly to the historic basis of the poem.









# I

## MILES STANDISH

IN the Old Colony Days, in Plymouth the  
land of the Pilgrims,  
To and fro in a room of his simple and primitive dwelling,  
Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cordovan leather,  
Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish the Puritan Captain.  
Buried in thought he seemed, with his hands behind him, and pausing  
Ever and anon to behold his glittering weapons of warfare,  
Hanging in shining array along the walls of the chamber, —  
Cutlass and corselet of steel, and his trusty sword of Damascus,  
Curved at the point and inscribed with its mystical Arabic sentence,  
While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-piece, musket, and matchlock.



## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Short of stature he was, but strongly built  
and athletic,  
Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with  
muscles and sinews of iron ;  
Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet  
beard was already  
Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges  
sometimes in November.  
Near him was seated John Alden, his friend  
and household companion,  
Writing with diligent speed at a table of  
pine by the window ;  
Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon  
complexion,  
Having the dew of his youth, and the beauty  
thereof, as the captives  
Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed,  
“Not Angles, but Angels.”  
Youngest of all was he of the men who came  
in the Mayflower.

Suddenly breaking the silence, the diligent  
scribe interrupting,  
Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles Stand-  
ish the Captain of Plymouth.  
“Look at these arms,” he said, “the warlike  
weapons that hang here

## *Miles Standish*

---

Burnished and bright and clean, as if for  
parade or inspection !  
This is the sword of Damascus I fought with  
in Flanders ; this breastplate,  
Well I remember the day ! once saved my  
life in a skirmish ;  
Here in front you can see the very dint of  
the bullet  
Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish  
arcabucero.  
Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgotten  
bones of Miles Standish  
Would at this moment be mould, in their  
grave in the Flemish morasses.”  
Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked  
not up from his writing :  
“Truly the breath of the Lord hath slack-  
ened the speed of the bullet ;  
He in his mercy preserved you, to be our  
shield and our weapon !”  
Still the Captain continued, unheeding the  
words of the stripling :  
“See, how bright they are burnished, as if  
in an arsenal hanging ;  
That is because I have done it myself, and  
not left it to others.  
Serve yourself, would you be well served, is  
an excellent adage ;

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

So I take care of my arms, as you of your  
pens and your inkhorn.

Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great,  
invincible army,

Twelve men, all equipped, having each his  
rest and his matchlock,

Eighteen shillings a month, together with  
diet and pillage,

And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each  
of my soldiers !”

This he said with a smile, that danced in his  
eyes, as the sunbeams

Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish  
again in a moment.

Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the Cap-  
tain continued:

“Look! you can see from this window my  
brazen howitzer planted

High on the roof of the church, a preacher  
who speaks to the purpose,

Steady, straightforward, and strong, with irre-  
sistible logic,

Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the  
hearts of the heathen.

Now we are ready, I think, for any assault  
of the Indians ;

Let them come, if they like, and the sooner  
they try it the better,—

## *Miles Standish*

---

Let them come, if they like, be it sagamore,  
sachem, or pow-wow,  
Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or  
Tokamahamon !”

Long at the window he stood, and wist-  
fully gazed on the landscape,  
Washed with a cold gray mist, the vapory  
breath of the east-wind,  
Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-  
blue rim of the ocean,  
Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shad-  
ows and sunshine.  
Over his countenance flitted a shadow like  
those on the landscape,  
Gloom intermingled with light ; and his voice  
was subdued with emotion,  
Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he  
proceeded :  
“Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies  
buried Rose Standish ;  
Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me  
by the wayside !  
She was the first to die of all who came in  
the Mayflower !  
Green above her is growing the field of wheat  
we have sown there,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Better to hide from the Indian scouts the  
    graves of our people,  
Lest they should count them\* and see how  
    many already have perished!"  
Sadly his face he averted, and strode up and  
    down, and was thoughtful.



Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of  
    books, and among them  
Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk  
    and for binding ;

## *Miles Standish*

---

Barriffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commen-  
taries of Cæsar  
Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Gold-  
inge of London,  
And, as if guarded by these, between them  
was standing the Bible.  
Musing a moment before them, Miles Stand-  
ish paused, as if doubtful  
Which of the three he should choose for his  
consolation and comfort,  
Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the fa-  
mous campaigns of the Romans,  
Or the Artillery practice, designed for bel-  
ligerent Christians.  
Finally down from its shelf he dragged the  
ponderous Roman,  
Seated himself at the window, and opened  
the book, and in silence  
Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where  
thumb-marks thick on the margin,  
Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the  
battle was hottest.  
Nothing was heard in the room but the hur-  
rying pen of the stripling,  
Busily writing epistles important, to go by  
the Mayflower,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at  
latest, God willing !  
Homeward bound with the tidings of all that  
terrible winter,  
Letters written by Alden, and full of the  
name of Priscilla !  
Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan  
maiden Priscilla !









## II

### LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

NOTHING was heard in the room  
but the hurrying pen of the strip-  
ling,

Or an occasional sigh from the laboring heart  
of the Captain,

Reading the marvellous words and achieve-  
ments of Julius Cæsar.

After a while he exclaimed, as he smote with  
his hand, palm downwards,

Heavily on the page: "A wonderful man  
was this Cæsar !

You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but  
here is a fellow

Who could both write and fight, and in both  
was equally skilful !"

Straightway answered and spake John Alden,  
the comely, the youthful :

"Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with  
his pen and his weapons.

Somewhere have I read, but where I forget,  
he could dictate

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his memoirs."

"Truly," continued the Captain, not heeding or hearing the other,

"Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Cæsar !

Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village,

Than be second in Rome, and I think he was right when he said it.

Twice was he married before he was twenty, and many times after ;

Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand cities he conquered ;

He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has recorded ;

Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator Brutus !

Now, do you know what he did on a certain occasion in Flanders,

When the rear-guard of his army retreated, the front giving way too,

And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so closely together

There was no room for their swords ? Why, he seized a shield from a soldier,

Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and commanded the captains,

## *Love and Friendship*

---

Calling on each by his name, to order forward the ensigns ;  
Then to widen the ranks, and give more room  
for their weapons ;  
So he won the day, the battle of something-or-other.  
'That's what I always say ; if you wish a thing  
to be well done,  
You must do it yourself, you must not leave  
it to others !'

All was silent again ; the Captain continued his reading.  
Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling  
Writing epistles important to go next day by the Mayflower,  
Filled with the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden Priscilla ;  
Every sentence began or closed with the name of Priscilla,  
Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the secret,  
Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the name of Priscilla !  
Finally closing his book, with a bang of the ponderous cover,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier  
grounding his musket,

Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish  
the Captain of Plymouth :

“When you have finished your work, I  
have something important to tell  
you.

Be not however in haste ; I can wait ; I shall  
not be impatient !”

Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the  
last of his letters,

Pushing his papers aside, and giving respect-  
ful attention :

“Speak ; for whenever you speak, I am al-  
ways ready to listen,

Always ready to hear whatever pertains to  
Miles Standish.”

Thereupon answered the Captain, embar-  
rassed, and culling his phrases :

“’T is not good for a man to be alone, say  
the Scriptures.

This I have said before, and again and again  
I repeat it ;

Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it,  
and say it.

Since Rose Standish died, my life has been  
weary and dreary ;

## *Love and Friendship*

---

Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing of friendship ;  
Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the maiden Priscilla.



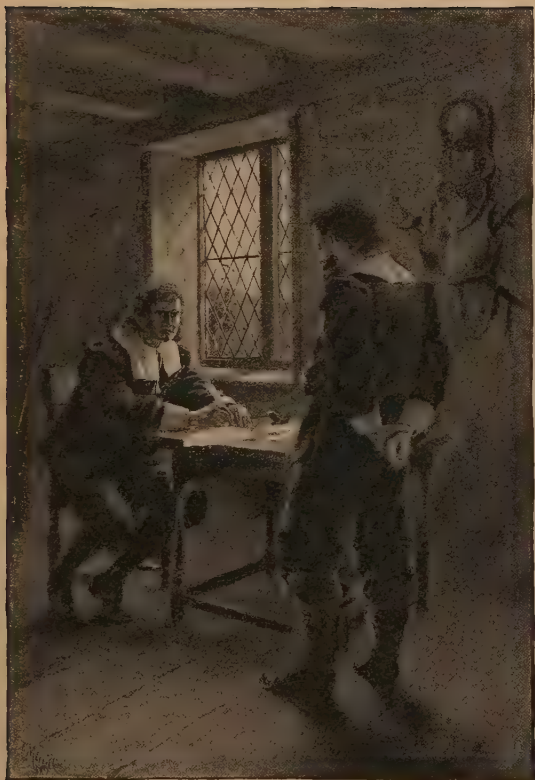
She is alone in the world ; her father and  
mother and brother  
Died in the winter together ; I saw her going  
and coming,  
Now to the grave of the dead, and now to  
the bed of the dying,



## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Patient, courageous, and strong, and said to  
myself, that if ever  
There were angels on earth, as there are an-  
gels in heaven,  
Two have I seen and known ; and the angel  
whose name is Priscilla  
Holds in my desolate life the place which  
the other abandoned.  
Long have I cherished the thought, but never  
have dared to reveal it,  
Being a coward in this, though valiant enough  
for the most part.  
Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden  
of Plymouth;  
Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of  
words but of actions,  
Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and  
heart of a soldier.  
Not in these words, you know, but this in  
short is my meaning ;  
I am a maker of war, and not a maker of  
phrases.  
You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in  
elegant language,  
Such as you read in your books of the plead-  
ings and wooings of lovers,  
Such as you think best adapted to win the  
heart of a maiden."



SURELY YOU CANNOT REFUSE



## *Love and Friendship*

---

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-haired, taciturn stripling,  
All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed, bewildered,  
Trying to mask his dismay by treating the subject with lightness,  
Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart stand still in his bosom,  
Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is stricken by lightning,  
Thus made answer and spake, or rather stammered than answered :  
“Such a message as that, I am sure I should mangle and mar it ;  
If you would have it well done, — I am only repeating your maxim, —  
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others !”  
But with the air of a man whom nothing can turn from his purpose,  
Gravely shaking his head, made answer the Captain of Plymouth :  
“Truly the maxim is good, and I do not mean to gainsay it ;  
But we must use it discreetly, and not waste powder for nothing.  
Now, as I said before, I was never a maker of phrases.

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

I can march up to a fortress and summon  
the place to surrender,  
But march up to a woman with such a pro-  
posal, I dare not.  
I'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the  
mouth of a cannon,  
But of a thundering 'No!' point-blank from  
the mouth of a woman,  
That I confess I'm afraid of, nor am I  
ashamed to confess it!  
So you must grant my request, for you are  
an elegant scholar,  
Having the graces of speech, and skill in the  
turning of phrases."  
Taking the hand of his friend, who still was  
reluctant and doubtful,  
Holding it long in his own, and pressing it  
kindly, he added :  
"Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet  
deep is the feeling that prompts  
me ;  
Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the  
name of our friendship !"  
Then made answer John Alden : "The name  
of friendship is sacred ;  
What you demand in that name, I have not  
the power to deny you !"

## *Love and Friendship*

---

So the strong will prevailed, subduing and  
moulding the gentler,  
Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden  
went on his errand.











### III

#### THE LOVER'S ERRAND

SO the strong will prevailed, and Alden  
went on his errand,  
Out of the street of the village, and into the  
paths of the forest,  
Into the tranquil woods, where bluebirds and  
robins were building  
Towns in the populous trees, with hanging  
gardens of verdure,  
Peaceful, aerial cities of joy and affection  
and freedom.  
All around him was calm, but within him  
commotion and conflict,  
Love contending with friendship, and self  
with each generous impulse.  
To and fro in his breast his thoughts were  
heaving and dashing,  
As in a foundering ship, with every roll of  
the vessel,  
Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge  
of the ocean !  
“Must I relinquish it all,” he cried with a  
wild lamentation, —

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

“Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope,  
the illusion ?

Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and  
worshipped in silence ?

Was it for this I have followed the flying  
feet and the shadow

Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores  
of New England ?

Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its  
depths of corruption

Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms  
of passion ;

Angels of light they seem, but are only delu-  
sions of Satan.

All is clear to me now ; I feel it, I see it dis-  
tinctly !

This is the hand of the Lord ; it is laid upon  
me in anger,

For I have followed too much the heart's de-  
sires and devices,

Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious  
idols of Baal.

This is the cross I must bear ; the sin and  
the swift retribution.”

So through the Plymouth woods John  
Alden went on his errand ;

## *The Lover's Errand*

---

Crossing the brook at the ford, where it  
brawled over pebble and shallow,  
Gathering still, as he went, the Mayflowers  
blooming around him,



Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and  
wonderful sweetness,  
Children lost in the woods, and covered with  
leaves in their slumber.  
“Puritan flowers,” he said, “and the type of  
Puritan maidens,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Modest and simple and sweet, the very type  
of Priscilla !

So I will take them to her ; to Priscilla the  
Mayflower of Plymouth,

Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting  
gift will I take them ;

Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade  
and wither and perish,

Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of  
the giver."

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden  
went on his errand ;

Came to an open space, and saw the disk of  
the ocean,

Sailless, sombre and cold with the comfort-  
less breath of the east-wind ;

Saw the new-built house, and the people at  
work in a meadow ;

Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical  
voice of Priscilla

Singing the hundredth Psalm, the grand old  
Puritan anthem,

Music that Luther sang to the sacred word  
of the Psalmist,

Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling  
and comforting many.

Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the  
form of the maiden

## *The Lover's Errand*

---

Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool  
like a snowdrift  
Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding  
the ravenous spindle,  
While with her foot on the treadle she  
guided the wheel in its motion.  
Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn  
psalm-book of Ainsworth,  
Printed in Amsterdam, the words and the  
music together,  
Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in  
the wall of a churchyard,  
Darkened and overhung by the running vine  
of the verses.  
Such was the book from whose pages she  
sang the old Puritan anthem,  
She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the  
forest,  
Making the humble house and the modest  
apparel of homespun  
Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the  
wealth of her being !  
Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen  
and cold and relentless,  
Thoughts of what might have been, and the  
weight and woe of his errand ;  
All the dreams that had faded, and all the  
hopes that had vanished,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

All his life henceforth a dreary and tenant-  
less mansion,  
Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrow-  
ful faces.  
Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely  
he said it,  
“Let not him that putteth his hand to the  
plough look backwards;  
Though the ploughshare cut through the  
flowers of life to its fountains,  
Though it pass o’er the graves of the dead  
and the hearths of the living,  
It is the will of the Lord; and his mercy  
endureth forever!”

So he entered the house: and the hum of  
the wheel and the singing  
Suddenly ceased; for Priscilla, aroused by  
his step on the threshold,  
Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand,  
in signal of welcome,  
Saying, “I knew it was you, when I heard  
your step in the passage;  
For I was thinking of you, as I sat there sing-  
ing and spinning.”  
Awkward and dumb with delight, that a  
thought of him had been mingled

## *The Lover's Errand*

---

Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from  
the heart of the maiden,  
Silent before her he stood, and gave her the  
flowers for an answer,



Finding no words for his thought. He re-  
membered that day in the winter,  
After the first great snow, when he broke  
a path from the village,  
Reeling and plunging along through the  
drifts that encumbered the doorway,  
Stamping the snow from his feet as he en-  
tered the house, and Priscilla  
Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a  
seat by the fireside.



## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Grateful and pleased to know he had thought  
of her in the snowstorm.  
Had he but spoken then ! perhaps not in  
vain had he spoken ;  
Now it was all too late ; the golden moment  
had vanished !  
So he stood there abashed, and gave her the  
flowers for an answer.

Then they sat down and talked of the birds  
and the beautiful Spring-time,  
Talked of their friends at home, and the  
Mayflower that sailed on the mor-  
row.  
“ I have been thinking all day,” said gently  
the Puritan maiden,  
“ Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of  
the hedge-rows of England, —  
They are in blossom now, and the country is  
all like a garden ;  
Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song  
of the lark and the linnet,  
Seeing the village street, and familiar faces  
of neighbors  
Going about as of old, and stopping to gos-  
sip together,  
And, at the end of the street, the village  
church, with the ivy

## *The Lover's Errand*

---

Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet  
    graves in the churchyard.  
Kind are the people I live with, and dear to  
    me my religion ;  
Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself  
    back in Old England.  
You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help  
    it : I almost  
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so  
    lonely and wretched."

Thereupon answered the youth : " Indeed  
    I do not condemn you ;  
Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed  
    in this terrible winter.  
Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a  
    stronger to lean on ;  
So I have come to you now, with an offer and  
    proffer of marriage  
Made by a good man and true, Miles Stand-  
    ish the Captain of Plymouth ! "

Thus he delivered his message, the dexter-  
    ous writer of letters,—  
Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in  
    beautiful phrases,  
But came straight to the point, and blurted  
    it out like a schoolboy ;

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

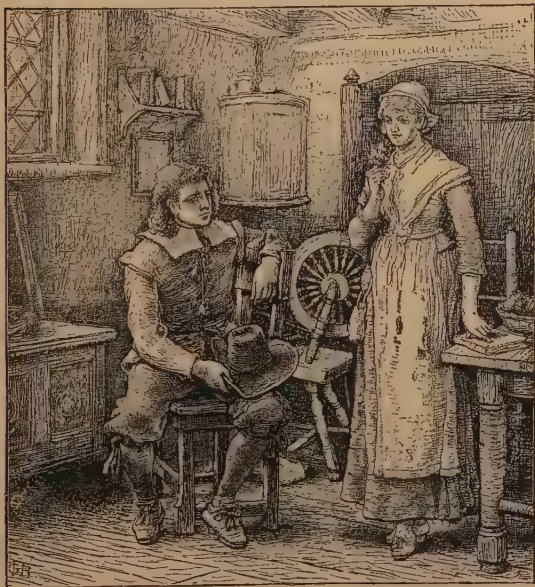
Even the Captain himself could hardly have  
said it more bluntly.  
Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla  
the Puritan maiden  
Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated  
with wonder,  
Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned  
her and rendered her speechless ;  
Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the  
ominous silence :  
" If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very  
eager to wed me,  
Why does he not come himself, and take the  
trouble to woo me ?  
If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am  
not worth the winning !"  
Then John Alden began explaining and  
smoothing the matter,  
Making it worse as he went, by saying the  
Captain was busy,—  
Had no time for such things ; — such things !  
the words grating harshly  
Fell on the ear of Priscilla ; and swift as a  
flash she made answer :  
" Has he no time for such things, as you call  
it, before he is married,  
Would he be likely to find it, or make it,  
after the wedding ?

## *The Lover's Errand*

---

That is the way with you men ; you don't  
understand us, you cannot.

When you have made up your minds, after  
thinking of this one and that one,



Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one  
with another,

Then you make known your desire, with ab-  
rupt and sudden avowal,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

And are offended and hurt, and indignant  
perhaps, that a woman  
Does not respond at once to a love that she  
never suspected,  
Does not attain at a bound the height to  
which you have been climbing.  
This is not right nor just : for surely a wo-  
man's affection  
Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for  
only the asking.  
When one is truly in love, one not only says  
it, but shows it.  
Had he but waited awhile, had he only showed  
that he loved me,  
Even this Captain of yours — who knows?  
— at last might have won me,  
Old and rough as he is ; but now it never  
can happen."

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the  
words of Priscilla,  
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, per-  
suading, expanding ;  
Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his  
battles in Flanders,  
How with the people of God he had chosen  
to suffer affliction ;

## *The Lover's Errand*

---

How, in return for his zeal, they had made  
him Captain of Plymouth ;  
He was a gentleman born, could trace his  
pedigree plainly  
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in  
Lancashire, England,  
Who was the son of Ralph, and the grand-  
son of Thurston de Standish ;  
Heir unto vast estates, of which he was  
basely defrauded,  
Still bore the family arms, and had for his  
crest a cock argent  
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest  
of the blazon.  
He was a man of honor, of noble and gener-  
ous nature ;  
Though he was rough, he was kindly ; she  
knew how during the winter  
He had attended the sick, with a hand as  
gentle as woman's ;  
Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny  
it, and headstrong,  
Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and  
placable always,  
Not to be laughed at and scorned, because  
he was little of stature ;  
For he was great of heart, magnanimous,  
courtly, courageous ;

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman  
in England,  
Might be happy and proud to be called the  
wife of Miles Standish !

But as he warmed and glowed, in his  
simple and eloquent language,  
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise  
of his rival,  
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes  
overrunning with laughter,  
Said, in a tremulous voice, " Why don't you  
speak for yourself, John ? "









## IV

JOHN ALDEN

INTO the open air John Alden, perplexed  
and bewildered,  
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered  
alone by the sea-side ;  
Paced up and down the sands, and bared his  
head to the east-wind,  
Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and  
fever within him.  
Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyp-  
tical splendors,  
Sank the City of God, in the vision of John  
the Apostle,  
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jas-  
per, and sapphire,  
Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets  
uplifted  
Glimmered the golden reed of the angel who  
measured the city.

“Welcome, O wind of the East !” he ex-  
claimed in his wild exultation,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

“Welcome, O wind of the East, from the  
caves of the misty Atlantic !  
Blowing o'er fields of dulse, and measureless  
meadows of sea-grass,  
Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottos  
and gardens of ocean !



Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning fore-  
head, and wrap me  
Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the  
fever within me !”

Like an awakened conscience, the sea was  
moaning and tossing,  
Beating remorseful and loud the mutable  
sands of the sea-shore.

Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of passions contending ;  
Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship wounded and bleeding,  
Passionate cries of desire, and importunate pleadings of duty !

“ Is it my fault,” he said, “ that the maiden has chosen between us ?

Is it my fault that he failed, — my fault that I am the victor ? ”

Then within him there thundered a voice, like the voice of the Prophet :

“ It hath displeased the Lord ! ” — and he thought of David’s transgression, Bathsheba’s beautiful face, and his friend in the front of the battle !

Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and self-condemnation,

Overwhelmed him at once ; and he cried in the deepest contrition :

“ It hath displeased the Lord ! It is the temptation of Satan ! ”

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the sea, and beheld there  
Dimly the shadowy form of the *Mayflower*  
riding at anchor,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail  
on the morrow;  
Heard the voices of men through the mist,  
the rattle of cordage  
Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate,  
and the sailors' "Ay, ay, Sir!"



Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the drip-  
ping air of the twilight.  
Still for a moment he stood, and listened,  
and stared at the vessel,  
Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing  
a phantom,

## *John Alden*

---

Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows  
the beckoning shadow.  
“ Yes, it is plain to me now,” he murmured ;  
“ the hand of the Lord is  
Leading me out of the land of darkness, the  
bondage of error,  
Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of  
its waters around me,  
Hiding me, cutting me off, from the cruel  
thoughts that pursue me.  
Back will I go o’er the ocean, this dreary  
land will abandon,  
Her whom I may not love, and him whom  
my heart has offended.  
Better to be in my grave in the green old  
churchyard in England,  
Close by my mother’s side, and among the  
dust of my kindred ;  
Better be dead and forgotten, than living in  
shame and dishonor ;  
Sacred and safe and unseen, in the dark of  
the narrow chamber  
With me my secret shall lie, like a buried  
jewel that glimmers  
Bright on the hand that is dust, in the cham-  
bers of silence and darkness,—  
Yes, as the marriage ring of the great es-  
pousal hereafter ! ”

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength  
of his strong resolution,  
Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried  
along in the twilight,  
Through the congenial gloom of the forest  
silent and sombre,  
Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses  
of Plymouth  
Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist  
of the evening.  
Soon he entered his door, and found the re-  
doubtable Captain  
Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial  
pages of Cæsar,  
Fighting some great campaign in Hainault  
or Brabant or Flanders.  
“Long have you been on your errand,” he  
said with a cheery demeanor,  
Even as one who is waiting an answer, and  
fears not the issue.  
“Not far off is the house, although the woods  
are between us ;  
But you have lingered so long, that while you  
were going and coming  
I have fought ten battles and sacked and de-  
molished a city.  
Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all  
that has happened.”

## *John Alden*

---

Then John Alden spake, and related the  
wondrous adventure,  
From beginning to end, minutely, just as it  
happened ;  
How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had  
sped in his courtship,  
Only smoothing a little, and softening down  
her refusal.  
But when he came at length to the words  
Priscilla had spoken,  
Words so tender and cruel: "Why don't  
you speak for yourself, John?"  
Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and  
stamped on the floor, till his armor  
Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a  
sound of sinister omen.  
All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden  
explosion,  
E'en as a hand-grenade, that scatters de-  
struction around it.  
Wildly he shouted, and loud: "John Alden!  
you have betrayed me!  
Me, Miles Standish, your friend! have sup-  
planted, defrauded, betrayed me!  
One of my ancestors ran his sword through  
the heart of Wat Tyler;  
Who shall prevent me from running my own  
through the heart of a traitor?"



## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a  
treason to friendship !

You, who lived under my roof, whom I cherished and loved as a brother ;

You, who have fed at my board, and drunk  
at my cup, to whose keeping

I have intrusted my honor, my thoughts the  
most sacred and secret,—

You too, Brutus ! ah woe to the name of  
friendship hereafter !

Brutus was Cæsar's friend, and you were  
mine, but henceforward

Let there be nothing between us save war,  
and implacable hatred !”

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and  
strode about in the chamber,

Chafing and choking with rage ; like cords  
were the veins on his temples.

But in the midst of his anger a man appeared  
at the doorway,

Bringing in uttermost haste a message of urgent importance,

Rumors of danger and war and hostile incursions of Indians.

Straightway the Captain paused, and, without further question or parley,

## *John Alden*

---

Took from the nail on the wall his sword  
with its scabbard of iron,  
Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frowning  
fiercely, departed.  
Alden was left alone. He heard the clank  
of the scabbard  
Growing fainter and fainter, and dying away  
in the distance.  
Then he arose from his seat, and looked forth  
into the darkness,  
Felt the cool air blow on his cheek, that was  
hot with the insult,  
Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding  
his hands as in childhood,  
Prayed in the silence of night to the Father  
who seeth in secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode  
wrathful away to the council,  
Found it already assembled, impatiently waiting  
his coming ;  
Men in the middle of life, austere and grave  
in deportment,  
Only one of them old, the hill that was nearest  
to heaven,  
Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent  
Elder of Plymouth.

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

God had sifted three kingdoms to find the  
wheat for this planting,  
Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed  
of a nation ;  
So say the chronicles old, and such is the  
faith of the people !  
Near them was standing an Indian, in attitude stern and defiant,  
Naked down to the waist, and grim and ferocious in aspect ;  
While on the table before them was lying  
unopened a Bible,  
Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded,  
printed in Holland,  
And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattlesnake glittered,  
Filled, like a quiver, with arrows ; a signal  
and challenge of warfare,  
Brought by the Indian, and speaking with  
arrowy tongues of defiance.  
This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered,  
and heard them debating  
What were an answer befitting the hostile  
message and menace,  
Talking of this and of that, contriving, suggesting, objecting ;  
One voice only for peace, and that the voice  
of the Elder,

## *John Alden*

---

Judging it wise and well that some at least  
were converted,  
Rather than any were slain, for this was but  
Christian behavior !  
Then out spake Miles Standish, the stalwart  
Captain of Plymouth,  
Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice  
was husky with anger,



“What ! do you mean to make war with milk  
and the water of roses ?  
Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your  
howitzer planted  
There on the roof of the church, or is it to  
shoot red devils ?

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Truly the only tongue that is understood by  
a savage

Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from  
the mouth of the cannon !”

Thereupon answered and said the excellent  
Elder of Plymouth,

Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this irreverent language :

“Not so thought St. Paul, nor yet the other  
Apostles ;

Not from the cannon’s mouth were the  
tongues of fire they spake with !”

But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the  
Captain,

Who had advanced to the table, and thus  
continued discoursing :

“Leave this matter to me, for to me by right  
it pertaineth.

War is a terrible trade ; but in the cause that  
is righteous,

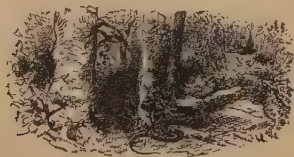
Sweet is the smell of powder ; and thus I  
answer the challenge !”

Then from the rattlesnake’s skin, with a  
sudden, contemptuous gesture,  
Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with  
powder and bullets

## *John Alden*

---

Full to the very jaws, and handed it back to  
the savage,  
Saying, in thundering tones : " Here, take  
it ! this is your answer ! "  
Silently out of the room then glided the glis-  
tening savage,  
Bearing the serpent's skin, and seeming him-  
self like a serpent,  
Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the  
depths of the forest.











## V

### THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

JUST in the gray of the dawn, as the mists  
uprose from the meadows,  
There was a stir and a sound in the slumber-  
ing village of Plymouth ;  
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order  
imperative, "Forward !"   
Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet,  
and then silence.  
Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out  
of the village.  
Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of  
his valorous army,  
Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok,  
friend of the white men,  
Northward marching to quell the sudden re-  
volt of the savage.  
Giants they seemed in the mist, or the  
mighty men of King David ;  
Giants in heart they were, who believed in  
God and the Bible,—

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midianites  
and Philistines.  
Over them gleamed far off the crimson banners of morning ;  
Under them loud on the sands, the serried billows, advancing,  
Fired along the line, and in regular order re-treated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at length the village of Plymouth  
Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on its manifold labors.  
Sweet was the air and soft ; and slowly the smoke from the chimneys  
Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed steadily eastward ;  
Men came forth from the doors, and paused and talked of the weather,  
Said that the wind had changed, and was blowing fair for the Mayflower ;  
Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the dangers that menaced,  
He being gone, the town, and what should be done in his absence.  
Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices of women



FIGURES TEN, IN THE MIST



## *The Sailing of the Mayflower*

---

Consecrated with hymns the common cares  
of the household.  
Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows  
rejoiced at his coming ;  
Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of  
the mountains ;  
Beautiful on the sails of the Mayflower rid-  
ing at anchor,  
Battered and blackened and worn by all the  
storms of the winter.  
Loosely against her masts was hanging and  
flapping her canvas,  
Rent by so many gales, and patched by the  
hands of the sailors.  
Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over  
the ocean,  
Darted a puff of smoke, and floated seaward ;  
anon rang  
Loud over field and forest the cannon's roar,  
and the echoes  
Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-  
gun of departure !  
Ah ! but with louder echoes replied the hearts  
of the people !  
Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was  
read from the Bible,  
Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in  
fervent entreaty !

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Then from their houses in haste came forth  
the Pilgrims of Plymouth,  
Men and women and children, all hurrying  
down to the sea-shore,



Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to  
the Mayflower,  
Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving  
them here in the desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All  
night he had lain without slumber,  
Turning and tossing about in the heat and  
unrest of his fever.

## *The Sailing of the Mayflower*

---

He had beheld Miles Standish, who came  
back late from the council,  
Stalking into the room, and heard him mut-  
ter and murmur,  
Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and some-  
times it sounded like swearing.  
Once he had come to the bed, and stood there  
a moment in silence ;  
Then he had turned away, and said : “ I will  
not awake him ;  
Let him sleep on, it is best ; for what is the  
use of more talking ! ”  
Then he extinguished the light, and threw  
himself down on his pallet,  
Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the  
break of the morning, —  
Covered himself with the cloak he had worn  
in his campaigns in Flanders, —  
Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac,  
ready for action.  
But with the dawn he arose ; in the twilight  
Alden beheld him  
Put on his corselet of steel, and all the rest  
of his armor,  
Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of  
Damascus,



## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Take from the corner his musket, and so  
stride out of the chamber.  
Often the heart of the youth had burned and  
yearned to embrace him,  
Often his lips had essayed to speak, implor-  
ing for pardon ;  
All the old friendship came back, with its  
tender and grateful emotions ;  
But his pride overmastered the nobler nature  
within him, —  
Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the  
burning fire of the insult.  
So he beheld his friend departing in anger,  
but spake not,  
Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to death,  
and he spake not !  
Then he arose from his bed, and heard what  
the people were saying,  
Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen  
and Richard and Gilbert,  
Joined in the morning prayer, and in the  
reading of Scripture,  
And, with the others, in haste went hurrying  
down to the sea-shore,  
Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been  
to their feet as a doorstep  
Into a world unknown, — the corner-stone  
of a nation !

## *The Sailing of the Mayflower*

---

There with his boat was the Master, already a little impatient  
Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind  
might shift to the eastward,  
Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an odor  
of ocean about him,



Speaking with this one and that, and cram-  
ming letters and parcels  
Into his pockets capacious, and messages  
mingled together  
Into his narrow brain, till at last he was  
wholly bewildered.  
Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot  
placed on the gunwale,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

One still firm on the rock, and talking at  
times with the sailors,  
Seated erect on the thwarts, all ready and  
eager for starting.  
He too was eager to go, and thus put an end  
to his anguish,  
Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter  
than keel is or canvas,  
Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost that  
would rise and pursue him.  
But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld the  
form of Priscilla  
Standing dejected among them, unconscious  
of all that was passing.  
Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she di-  
vined his intention,  
Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, im-  
ploring, and patient,  
That with a sudden revulsion his heart re-  
coiled from its purpose,  
As from the verge of a crag, where one step  
more is destruction.  
Strange is the heart of man, with its quick,  
mysterious instincts !  
Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated  
are moments,

## *The Sailing of the Mayflower*

---

Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of  
the wall adamantine !

“Here I remain !” he exclaimed, as he  
looked at the heavens above him,

Thanking the Lord whose breath had scat-  
tered the mist and the madness,

Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was  
staggering headlong.

“Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the  
ether above me,

Seems like a hand that is pointing and beck-  
oning over the ocean.

There is another hand, that is not so spectral  
and ghost-like,

Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping  
mine for protection.

Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in  
the ether !

Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and  
daunt me ; I heed not

Either your warning or menace, or any omen  
of evil !

There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and  
so wholesome,

As is the air she breathes, and the soil that  
is pressed by her footsteps.

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Here for her sake will I stay, and like an in-  
visible presence  
Hover around her forever, protecting, sup-  
porting her weakness ;  
Yes! as my foot was the first that stepped  
on this rock at the landing,  
So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the  
last at the leaving !”

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dig-  
nified air and important,  
Scanning with watchful eye the tide and the  
wind and the weather,  
Walked about on the sands, and the people  
crowded around him  
Saying a few last words, and enforcing his  
careful remembrance.  
Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were  
grasping a tiller,  
Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved  
off to his vessel,  
Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry  
and flurry,  
Glad to be gone from a land of sand and  
sickness and sorrow,  
Short allowance of victual, and plenty of  
nothing but Gospel !

## *The Sailing of the Mayflower*

---

Lost in the sound of the oars was the last  
farewell of the Pilgrims.

O strong hearts and true ! not one went back  
in the Mayflower !

No, not one looked back, who had set his  
hand to this ploughing !

Soon were heard on board the shouts and  
songs of the sailors  
Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting  
the ponderous anchor.  
Then the yards were braced, and all sails set  
to the west-wind,  
Blowing steady and strong ; and the May-  
flower sailed from the harbor,  
Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and leav-  
ing far to the southward  
Island and cape of sand, and the Field of the  
First Encounter,  
Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for  
the open Atlantic,  
Borne on the sand of the sea, and the swell-  
ing hearts of the Pilgrims.

Long in silence they watched the receding  
sail of the vessel,  
Much endeared to them all, as something  
living and human ;

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapt  
in a vision prophetic,  
Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder  
of Plymouth  
Said, "Let us pray!" and they prayed, and  
thanked the Lord and took courage.  
Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of  
the rock, and above them  
Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill  
of death, and their kindred  
Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join  
in the prayer that they uttered.  
Sun-illumined and white, on the eastern verge  
of the ocean  
Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble  
slab in a graveyard;  
Buried beneath it lay forever all hope of es-  
caping.  
Lo! as they turned to depart, they saw the  
form of an Indian,  
Watching them from the hill; but while they  
spake with each other,  
Pointing with outstretched hands, and say-  
ing, "Look!" he had vanished.  
So they returned to their homes; but Alden  
lingered a little,  
Musing alone on the shore, and watching the  
wash of the billows

## *The Sailing of the Mayflower*

---

Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle  
and flash of the sunshine,  
Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over  
the waters.











## VI

### PRISCILLA

THUS for a while he stood, and mused  
by the shore of the ocean,  
Thinking of many things, and most of all of  
Priscilla ;  
And as if thought had the power to draw to  
itself, like the loadstone,  
Whatsoever it touches, by subtle laws of its  
nature,  
Lo ! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was  
standing beside him.

“Are you so much offended, you will not  
speak to me ?” said she.  
“Am I so much to blame, that yesterday,  
when you were pleading  
Warmly the cause of another, my heart, im-  
pulsive and wayward,  
Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful  
perhaps of decorum ?  
Certainly you can forgive me for speaking so  
frankly, for saying

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

What I ought not to have said, yet now I  
can never unsay it ;  
For there are moments in life, when the heart  
is so full of emotion,  
That if by chance it be shaken, or into its  
depths like a pebble  
Drops some careless word, it overflows, and  
its secret,  
Spilt on the ground like water, can never be  
gathered together.  
Yesterday I was shocked, when I heard you  
speak of Miles Standish,  
Praising his virtues, transforming his very  
defects into virtues,  
Praising his courage and strength, and even  
his fighting in Flanders,  
As if by fighting alone you could win the  
heart of a woman,  
Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in  
exalting your hero.  
Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible  
impulse.  
You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of  
the friendship between us,  
Which is too true and too sacred to be so  
easily broken ! ”  
Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar,  
the friend of Miles Standish :

## *Priscilla*

---

"I was not angry with you, with myself  
alone I was angry,  
Seeing how badly I managed the matter I  
had in my keeping."  
"No!" interrupted the maiden, with answer  
prompt and decisive;  
"No; you were angry with me, for speaking  
so frankly and freely.  
It was wrong, I acknowledge; for it is the  
fate of a woman  
Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a  
ghost that is speechless,  
Till some questioning voice dissolves the  
spell of its silence.  
Hence is the inner life of so many suffering  
women  
Sunless and silent and deep, like subterra-  
nean rivers  
Running through caverns of darkness, un-  
heard, unseen, and unfruitful,  
Chafing their channels of stone, with endless  
and profitless murmurs."  
Thereupon answered John Alden, the young  
man, the lover of women :  
"Heaven forbid it, Priscilla; and truly they  
seem to me always  
More like the beautiful rivers that watered  
the garden of Eden,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

More like the river Euphrates, through deserts of Havilah flowing,  
Filling the land with delight, and memories sweet of the garden ! ”  
“ Ah, by these words I can see, ” again interrupted the maiden,  
“ How very little you prize me, or care for what I am saying.  
When from the depths of my heart, in pain and with secret misgiving,  
Frankly I speak to you, asking for sympathy only and kindness,  
Straightway you take up my words, that are plain and direct and in earnest,  
Turn them away from their meaning, and answer with flattering phrases.  
This is not right, is not just, is not true to the best that is in you ;  
For I know and esteem you, and feel that your nature is noble,  
Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal level.  
Therefore I value your friendship, and feel it perhaps the more keenly  
If you say aught that implies I am only as one among many,  
If you make use of those common and complimentary phrases

## *Priscilla*

---

Most men think so fine, in dealing and speak-  
ing with women,  
But which women reject as insipid, if not as  
insulting."

Mute and amazed was Alden ; and listened  
and looked at Priscilla,



Thinking he never had seen her more fair,  
more divine in her beauty.  
He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the  
cause of another,  
Stood there embarrassed and silent, and seek-  
ing in vain for an answer.  
So the maiden went on, and little divined or  
imagined



## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

What was at work in his heart, that made  
him so awkward and speechless.

“Let us, then, be what we are, and speak  
what we think, and in all things

Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred  
professions of friendship.

It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed  
to declare it :

I have liked to be with you, to see you, to  
speak with you always.

So I was hurt at your words, and a little af-  
fronted to hear you

Urge me to marry your friend, though he  
were the Captain Miles Standish.

For I must tell you the truth : much more  
to me is your friendship

Than all the love he could give, were he  
twice the hero you think him.”

Then she extended her hand, and Alden,  
who eagerly grasped it,

Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were  
aching and bleeding so sorely,

Healed by the touch of that hand, and he  
said, with a voice full of feeling :

“Yes, we must ever be friends ; and of all  
who offer you friendship

Let me be ever the first, the truest, the near-  
est and dearest !”

## *Priscilla*

---

Casting a farewell look at the glimmering  
sail of the Mayflower,  
Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below  
the horizon,  
Homeward together they walked, with a  
strange, indefinite feeling,  
That all the rest had departed and left them  
alone in the desert.  
But, as they went through the fields in the  
blessing and smile of the sunshine,  
Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla said  
very archly :  
“Now that our terrible Captain is gone in  
pursuit of the Indians,  
Where he is happier far than he would be  
commanding a household,  
You may speak boldly, and tell me of all that  
happened between you,  
When you returned last night, and said how  
ungrateful you found me.”  
Thereupon answered John Alden, and told  
her the whole of the story, —  
Told her his own despair, and the direful  
wrath of Miles Standish.  
Whereat the maiden smiled, and said be-  
tween laughing and earnest,  
“He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a  
moment ! ”

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

But as he gently rebuked her, and told her  
how he had suffered, —  
How he had even determined to sail that day  
in the Mayflower,  
And had remained for her sake, on hearing  
the dangers that threatened, —  
All her manner was changed, and she said  
with a faltering accent,  
“Truly I thank you for this : how good you  
have been to me always !”

Thus, as a pilgrim devout, who toward Je-  
rusalem journeys,  
Taking three steps in advance, and one reluc-  
tantly backward,  
Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by  
pangs of contrition ;  
Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet  
ever advancing,  
Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy  
Land of his longings,  
Urged by the fervor of love, and withheld by  
remorseful misgivings.







## VII

### THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

MEANWHILE the stalwart Miles Standish was marching steadily northward, Winding through forest and swamp, and along the trend of the sea-shore, All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of his anger Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous odor of powder Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all the scents of the forest. Silent and moody he went, and much he revolved his discomfort ; He who was used to success, and to easy victories always, Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed to scorn by a maiden, Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the friend whom most he had trusted ! Ah ! 't was too much to be borne, and he fretted and chafed in his armor !

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

“I alone am to blame,” he muttered, “for  
mine was the folly.  
What has a rough old soldier, grown grim  
and gray in the harness,  
Used to the camp and its ways, to do with  
the wooing of maidens?  
'T was but a dream, — let it pass, — let it  
vanish like so many others!  
What I thought was a flower is only a weed,  
and is worthless;  
Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw  
it away, and henceforward  
Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer  
of dangers!”  
Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry de-  
feat and discomfort,  
While he was marching by day or lying at  
night in the forest,  
Looking up at the trees, and the constella-  
tions beyond them.

After a three days' march he came to an  
Indian encampment  
Pitched on the edge of a meadow, between  
the sea and the forest;  
Women at work by the tents, and warriors,  
horrid with war-paint,

## *The March of Miles Standish*

---

Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking together ;  
Who, when they saw from afar the sudden approach of the white men,  
Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate and sabre and musket,  
Straightway leaped to their feet, and two, from among them advancing,  
Came to parley with Standish, and offer him furs as a present ;  
Friendship was in their looks, but in their hearts there was hatred.  
Braves of the tribe were these, and brothers, gigantic in stature,  
Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible Og, king of Bashan ;  
One was Pecksuot named, and the other was called Wattawamat.  
Round their necks were suspended their knives in scabbards of wampum,  
Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as sharp as a needle.  
Other arms had they none, for they were cunning and crafty.  
“Welcome, English !” they said, — these words they had learned from the traders



## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Touching at times on the coast, to barter and  
chaffer for peltries.  
Then in their native tongue they began to  
parley with Standish,  
Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok,  
friend of the white man,  
Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly  
for muskets and powder,  
Kept by the white man, they said, concealed,  
with the plague, in his cellars,  
Ready to be let loose, and destroy his brother  
the red man!  
But when Standish refused, and said he  
would give them the Bible,  
Suddenly changing their tone, they began to  
boast and to bluster.  
Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride in  
front of the other,  
And, with a lofty demeanor, thus vauntingly  
spake to the Captain :  
“ Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery eyes  
of the Captain,  
Angry is he in his heart ; but the heart of  
the brave Wattawamat  
Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born  
of a woman,  
But on a mountain at night, from an oak-tree  
riven by lightning,

## *The March of Miles Standish*

---

Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his  
weapons about him,  
Shouting, 'Who is there here to fight with  
the brave Wattawamat?'"

Then he unsheathed his knife, and, whetting  
the blade on his left hand,



Held it aloft and displayed a woman's face  
on the handle ;  
Saying, with bitter expression and look of  
sinister meaning :  
"I have another at home, with the face of a  
man on the handle ;  
By and by they shall marry ; and there will  
be plenty of children !"

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting,  
insulting Miles Standish :  
While with his fingers he patted the knife  
that hung at his bosom,  
Drawing it half from its sheath, and plung-  
ing it back, as he muttered,  
“By and by it shall see ; it shall eat ; ah,  
ha ! but shall speak not !  
This is the mighty Captain the white men  
have sent to destroy us !  
He is a little man ; let him go and work with  
the women !”

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces  
and figures of Indians  
Peeping and creeping about from bush to  
tree in the forest,  
Feigning to look for game, with arrows set  
on their bowstrings,  
Drawing about him still closer and closer the  
net of their ambush.  
But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and  
treated them smoothly ;  
So the old chronicles say, that were writ in  
the days of the fathers.  
But when he heard their defiance, the boast,  
the taunt, and the insult,



HE FELL, CLUTCHING THE GREENSWARD



## *The March of Miles Standish*

---

All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh  
and of Thurston de Standish,  
Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in  
the veins of his temples.  
Headlong he leaped on the boaster, and,  
snatching his knife from its scab-  
bard,  
Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling back-  
ward, the savage  
Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike  
fierceness upon it.  
Straight there arose from the forest the awful  
sound of the war-whoop,  
And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling  
wind of December,  
Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of  
feathery arrows.  
Then came a cloud of smoke, and out of the  
cloud came the lightning,  
Out of the lightning thunder ; and death un-  
seen ran before it.  
Frightened the savages fled for shelter in  
swamp and in thicket,  
Hotly pursued and beset ; but their sachem,  
the brave Wattawamat,  
Fled not ; he was dead. Unswerving and  
swift had a bullet

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Passed through his brain, and he fell with  
both hands clutching the greensward,  
Seeming in death to hold back from his foe  
the land of his fathers.

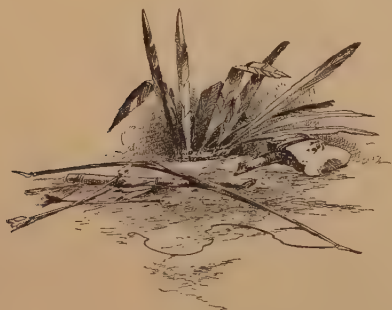
There on the flowers of the meadow the  
warriors lay, and above them,  
Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok,  
friend of the white man.  
Smiling at length he exclaimed to the stal-  
wart Captain of Plymouth :—  
“ Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage,  
his strength, and his stature, —  
Mocked the great Captain, and called him a  
little man ; but I see now  
Big enough have you been to lay him speech-  
less before you ! ”

Thus the first battle was fought and won  
by the stalwart Miles Standish.  
When the tidings thereof were brought to  
the village of Plymouth,  
And as a trophy of war the head of the brave  
Wattawamat  
Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at  
once was a church and a fortress,  
All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the  
Lord, and took courage.

## *The March of Miles Standish*

---

Only Priscilla averted her face from this  
spectre of terror,  
Thanking God in her heart that she had not  
married Miles Standish ;  
Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home  
from his battles,  
He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize  
and reward of his valor.











## VIII

### THE SPINNING-WHEEL

MONTH after month passed away, and  
in Autumn the ships of the merchants  
Came with kindred and friends, with cattle  
and corn for the Pilgrims.  
All in the village was peace; the men were  
intent on their labors,  
Busy with hewing and building, with garden-  
plot and with merestead,  
Busy with breaking the glebe, and mowing  
the grass in the meadows,  
Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting  
the deer in the forest.  
All in the village was peace; but at times  
the rumor of warfare  
Filled the air with alarm, and the apprehen-  
sion of danger.  
Bravely the stalwart Standish was scouring  
the land with his forces,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Waxing valiant in fight and defeating the  
alien armies,  
Till his name had become a sound of fear to  
the nations.  
Anger was still in his heart, but at times the  
remorse and contrition  
Which in all noble natures succeed the pas-  
sionate outbreak,  
Came like a rising tide, that encounters the  
rush of a river,  
Staying its current awhile, but making it  
bitter and brackish.

Meanwhile Alden at home had built him  
a new habitation,  
Solid, substantial, of timber rough-hewn from  
the firs of the forest.  
Wooden-barred was the door, and the roof  
was covered with rushes ;  
Latticed the windows were, and the window-  
panes were of paper,  
Oiled to admit the light, while wind and rain  
were excluded.  
There too he dug a well, and around it  
planted an orchard :  
Still may be seen to this day some trace of  
the well and the orchard.

## *The Spinning-Wheel*

---

Close to the house was the stall, where, safe  
and secure from annoyance,  
Raghorn, the snow-white bull, that had fallen  
to Alden's allotment



In the division of cattle, might ruminate in  
the night-time  
Over the pastures he cropped, made fragrant  
by sweet pennyroyal.

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Oft when his labor was finished, with eager  
feet would the dreamer  
Follow the pathway that ran through the  
woods to the house of Priscilla,  
Led by illusions romantic and subtile decep-  
tions of fancy,  
Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the  
semblance of friendship.  
Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned  
the walls of his dwelling ;  
Ever of her he thought, when he delved in  
the soil of his garden ;  
Ever of her he thought, when he read in his  
Bible on Sunday  
Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is de-  
scribed in the Proverbs, —  
How the heart of her husband doth safely  
trust in her always,  
How all the days of her life she will do him  
good, and not evil,  
How she seeketh the wool and the flax and  
worketh with gladness,  
How she layeth her hand to the spindle and  
holdeth the distaff,  
How she is not afraid of the snow for herself  
or her household,  
Knowing her household are clothed with the  
scarlet cloth of her weaving !

## *The Spinning-Wheel*

---

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon  
in the Autumn,  
Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching  
her dexterous fingers,  
As if the thread she was spinning were that  
of his life and his fortune,  
After a pause in their talk, thus spake to the  
sound of the spindle.  
“Truly, Priscilla,” he said, “when I see you  
spinning and spinning,  
Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thoughtful  
of others,  
Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly  
changed in a moment ;  
You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha the  
Beautiful Spinner.”  
Here the light foot on the treadle grew  
swifter and swifter ; the spindle  
Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread  
snapped short in her fingers ;  
While the impetuous speaker, not heeding  
the mischief, continued :  
“You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner,  
the queen of Helvetia ;  
She whose story I read at a stall in the  
streets of Southampton,  
Who, as she rode on her palfrey, o’er valley  
and meadow and mountain,



## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff  
fixed to her saddle.  
She was so thrifty and good, that her name  
passed into a proverb.  
So shall it be with your own, when the spin-  
ning-wheel shall no longer  
Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill its  
chambers with music.  
Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate  
how it was in their childhood,  
Praising the good old times, and the days of  
Priscilla the spinner!"

Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful  
Puritan maiden,  
Pleased with the praise of her thrift from  
him whose praise was the sweetest,  
Drew from the reel on the table a snowy  
skein of her spinning,  
Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the flat-  
tering phrases of Alden :

"Come, you must not be idle ; if I am a pat-  
tern for housewives,  
Show yourself equally worthy of being the  
model of husbands.  
Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind  
it, ready for knitting ;  
Then who knows but hereafter, when fash-  
ions have changed and the manners,



STANDING GRACEFUL, ERECT



## *The Spinning-Wheel*

---

Fathers may talk to their sons of the good  
old times of John Alden !”  
Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on  
his hands she adjusted,  
He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms  
extended before him,  
She standing graceful, erect, and winding  
the thread from his fingers,  
Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy man-  
ner of holding,  
Sometimes touching his hands, as she disen-  
tangled expertly  
Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares — for  
how could she help it? —  
Sending electrical thrills through every nerve  
in his body.

Lo ! in the midst of this scene, a breathless  
messenger entered,  
Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news  
from the village.  
Yes ; Miles Standish was dead ! — an Indian  
had brought them the tidings, —  
Slain by a poisoned arrow, shot down in the  
front of the battle,  
Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the  
whole of his forces ;

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

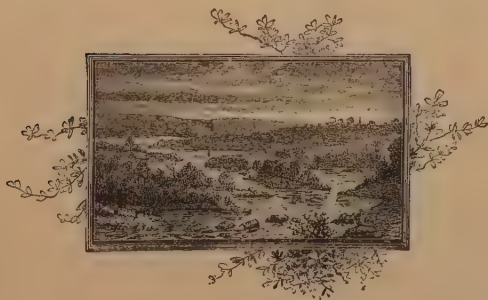
All the town would be burned, and all the  
people be murdered !  
Such were the tidings of evil that burst on  
the hearts of the hearers.  
Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her face  
looking backward  
Still at the face of the speaker, her arms up-  
lifted in horror ;  
But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb of  
the arrow  
Piercing the heart of his friend had struck  
his own, and had sundered  
Once and forever the bonds that held him  
bound as a captive,  
Wild with excess of sensation, the awful de-  
light of his freedom,  
Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious  
of what he was doing,  
Clasped, almost with a groan, the motionless  
form of Priscilla,  
Pressing her close to his heart, as forever his  
own, and exclaiming :  
“Those whom the Lord hath united, let no  
man put them asunder !”

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and  
separate sources,

## *The Spinning-Wheel*

---

Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the  
rocks, and pursuing  
Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer  
and nearer,  
Rush together at last, at their trysting-place  
in the forest ;  
So these lives that had run thus far in sepa-  
rate channels,  
Coming in sight of each other, then swerving  
and flowing asunder,  
Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer  
and nearer,  
Rushed together at last, and one was lost in  
the other.











## IX

### THE WEDDING-DAY

FORTH from the curtain of clouds, from  
the tent of purple and scarlet,  
Issued the sun, the great High-Priest, in his  
garments resplendent,  
Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light,  
on his forehead,  
Round the hem of his robe the golden bells  
and pomegranates.  
Blessing the world he came, and the bars of  
vapor beneath him  
Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea at  
his feet was a laver !

This was the wedding morn of Priscilla the  
Puritan maiden.  
Friends were assembled together ; the Elder  
and Magistrate also  
Graced the scene with their presence, and  
stood like the Law and the Gospel,  
One with the sanction of earth and one with  
the blessing of heaven.

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Simple and brief was the wedding, as that of  
Ruth and of Boaz.

Softly the youth and the maiden repeated  
the words of betrothal,

Taking each other for husband and wife in  
the Magistrate's presence,

After the Puritan way, and the laudable cus-  
tom of Holland.

Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent  
Elder of Plymouth

Prayed for the hearth and the home, that  
were founded that day in affection,

Speaking of life and of death, and imploring  
Divine benedictions.

Lo! when the service was ended, a form  
appeared on the threshold,

Clad in armor of steel, a sombre and sorrow-  
ful figure!

Why does the bridegroom start and stare at  
the strange apparition?

Why does the bride turn pale, and hide her  
face on his shoulder?

Is it a phantom of air, — a bodiless, spectral  
illusion?

Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come  
to forbid the betrothal?

## *The Wedding-Day*

---

Long had it stood there unseen, a guest un-  
invited, unwelcomed ;  
Over its clouded eyes there had passed at  
times an expression  
Softening the gloom and revealing the warm  
heart hidden beneath them.



As when across the sky the driving rack of  
the rain-cloud  
Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the  
sun by its brightness.  
Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its  
lips, but was silent,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting  
intention.

But when were ended the troth and the  
prayer and the last benediction,  
Into the room it strode, and the people be-  
held with amazement

Bodily there in his armor Miles Standish,  
the Captain of Plymouth !

Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with  
emotion, "Forgive me !

I have been angry and hurt, — too long have  
I cherished the feeling ;

I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank  
God ! it is ended.

Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in  
the veins of Hugh Standish,

Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in  
atoning for error.

Never so much as now was Miles Standish  
the friend of John Alden."

Thereupon answered the bridegroom : " Let  
all be forgotten between us, —

All save the dear, old friendship, and that  
shall grow older and dearer ! "

Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing,  
saluted Priscilla,

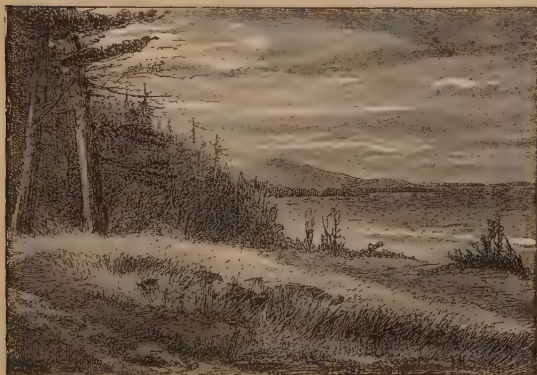
Gravely, and after the manner of old-fash-  
ioned gentry in England,

## *The Wedding-Day*

---

Something of camp and of court, of town  
and of country, commingled,  
Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly  
lauding her husband.

Then he said with a smile : " I should have  
remembered the adage, —



If you would be well served, you must serve  
yourself ; and moreover,  
No man can gather cherries in Kent at the  
season of Christmas ! ”

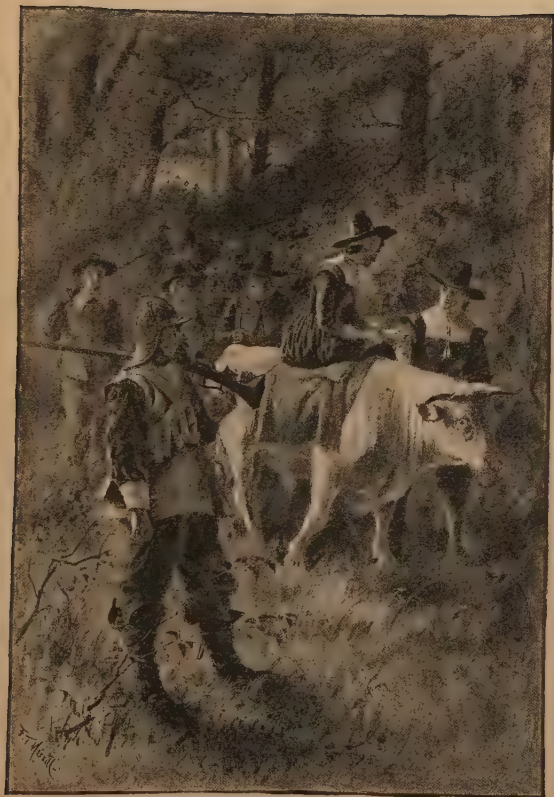
Great was the people’s amazement, and  
greater yet their rejoicing,  
Thus to behold once more the sunburnt face  
of their Captain,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

---

Whom they had mourned as dead ; and  
they gathered and crowded about  
him,  
Eager to see him and hear him, forgetful of  
bride and of bridegroom,  
Questioning, answering, laughing, and each  
interrupting the other,  
Till the good Captain declared, being quite  
overpowered and bewildered,  
He had rather by far break into an Indian  
encampment,  
Than come again to a wedding to which he  
had not been invited.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth  
and stood with the bride at the door-  
way,  
Breathing the perfumed air of that warm and  
beautiful morning.  
Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely and  
sad in the sunshine,  
Lay extended before them the land of toil  
and privation ;  
There were the graves of the dead, and the  
barren waste of the sea-shore,  
There the familiar fields, the groves of pine,  
and the meadows ;



THE BRIDAL PROCESSION





## *The Wedding-Day*

---

But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as  
the Garden of Eden,  
Filled with the presence of God, whose voice  
was the sound of the ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the  
noise and stir of departure,  
Friends coming forth from the house, and  
impatient of longer delaying,  
Each with his plan for the day, and the work  
that was left uncompleted.  
Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclamations of wonder,  
Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy,  
so proud of Priscilla,  
Brought out his snow-white bull, obeying the  
hand of its master,  
Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring  
in its nostrils,  
Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion  
placed for a saddle.  
She should not walk, he said, through the  
dust and heat of the noonday ;  
Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod  
along like a peasant.  
Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured by  
the others,

## *Courtship of Miles Standish*

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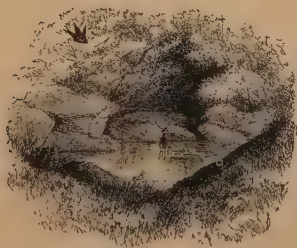
Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot in  
the hand of her husband,  
Gayly, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted  
her palfrey.  
“Nothing is wanting now,” he said with a  
smile, “but the distaff;  
Then you would be in truth my queen, my  
beautiful Bertha !”

Onward the bridal procession now moved  
to their new habitation,  
Happy husband and wife, and friends con-  
versing together.  
Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they  
crossed the ford in the forest,  
Pleased with the image that passed, like a  
dream of love through its bosom,  
Tremulous, floating in air, o’er the depths of  
the azure abysses.  
Down through the golden leaves the sun was  
pouring his splendors,  
Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from  
branches above them suspended,  
Mingled their odorous breath with the balm  
of the pine and the fir-tree,  
Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in  
the valley of Eshcol.

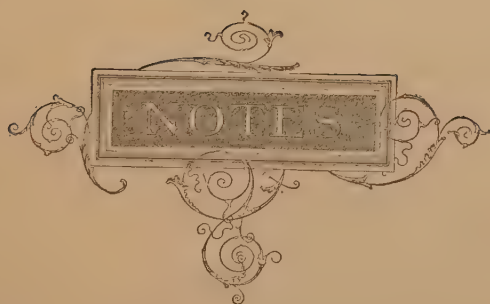
## *The Wedding-Day*

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Like a picture it seemed of the primitive,  
pastoral ages,  
Fresh with the youth of the world, and re-  
calling Rebecca and Isaac,  
Old and yet ever new, and simple and beau-  
tiful always,  
Love immortal and young in the endless suc-  
cession of lovers.  
So through the Plymouth woods passed on-  
ward the bridal procession.









## NOTES

Page 17. *Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish, the Puritan Captain.*

There is no absolutely authenticated portrait of the doughty captain. The accompanying sketch follows an old painting owned by the late Captain A. M. Harrison, of Plymouth, and now hanging in Pilgrim Hall, which purports to be a likeness of Standish taken at the age of thirty-eight, in the year 1625. Captain Harrison gives an account of the



*Myles Standish*

history of the picture, as far as known, in a letter printed in the *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, xv. 324 (October, 1877). A large engraving on wood, from a photograph of the painting, may be seen in *The Memorial History of Boston*, i. 65.

Page 17. *While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-piece, musket, and matchlock.*

A fowling-piece was a light gun for shooting



## Notes

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birds ; a matchlock was a musket, the lock of which held a match or piece of twisted rope prepared to retain fire.



MATCHLOCK AND REST.

As late as 1687 matchlocks were used instead of flint-locks, which had then come into general use. In Bradford and Winslow's *Journal* (Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrims*, p. 175), we are told of a party setting out "with every man his musket, sword, and corselet, under the conduct of Captain Miles Standish." That these muskets were matchlocks, appears from another passage in the same journal, p. 142: "Then we lighted all our matches and prepared ourselves, concluding that we were near their dwellings."

Page 18. *Short of stature he was, but strongly built and athletic.*

All reports agree that Standish was a little fellow. His detractors characterize him as a "silly boy." Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation*, Book II. p. 180.

## Notes

Page 18. *Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon complexion.*

Tradition, as well as characteristics in the descendants of Alden, bears out the poet's description. Tradition, however, varies as to whether Alden or the girl Mary Chilton was the first to step on Plymouth rock after the Mayflower reached the harbor. He was one of the signers of the compact in the cabin of the Mayflower at Provincetown, and the last survivor of that company.



Page 19. *This is the sword of Damascus I fought with in Flanders.*

Standish's sword is preserved in the group contained in the cabinet of the Massachusetts Historical Society, which includes also the swords of Governor Carver and Elder Brewster.



MILES STANDISH'S SWORD.

Another sword belonging to Standish is preserved in Pilgrim Hall, in Plymouth. His service in the English contingent that aided the Dutch in their contest with Spain is a matter of history, and the details

## Notes

of the conflict during Standish's service are well given in Mr. Clements R. Markham's *The Fighting Veres*. Standish was not one of Robinson's church before it left England, but he fell in with Robinson and his congregation, and joined the Pilgrims in their venture to America. He never belonged to the Pilgrims' church, and circumstantial evidence has been elaborately built upon by Dr. John Gilmary Shea, in *Magazine of American History*, i. 390, to demonstrate that he was a Romanist.

Page 20. *Look! you can see from this window  
my brazen howitzer planted  
High on the roof of the church, a  
preacher who speaks to the purpose.*

The time of this conversation is made by the poet to be before the return of the Mayflower, which was in April, 1621. But the meeting-house which Standish only, if the conjecture of his early training be assumed, was likely to call a church, was not built for a year after this time. There was in the spring of 1621 a platform on Burial Hill, with ordnance upon it.

Page 21. *Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto,  
or Tokamahamon.*

Names of Indians who are mentioned in the early chronicles.

## Notes

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Page 21. *She was the first to die of all who came in the Mayflower.*

Rose Standish died January 29, 1621. Of the one hundred and two passengers of the Mayflower, fifty-one died within a few months. Perhaps the captain was thinking of the dreadful mortality which befell the company after the exposure incident to the landing. Bradford's wife, Dorothy, fell overboard and was drowned early in December, when the exploring party, including her husband, was absent. The bill of mortality, as collected by Prince, from Bradford's pocket-book, shows that six died in December.

Page 21. *Green above her is growing the field of wheat we have sown there.*

"The burials of that first winter were made on what was later known as Coale's Hill, identical with the present terrace above the rock." (*Narrative and Critical History of America*, iii. 273.) The tradition of the effacement of the marks of burial, lest the Indians should discover how the colony had been weakened, is preserved in Holmes's *Annals*. Grass, however, and not wheat, was the seed sown.

Page 23. *Barriffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries of Cæsar.*

The inventory of Miles Standish's books may

## Notes

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be found in *N. E. Hist. and Geneal. Reg.* i. 54. The elaborate title of the military manual was: *Militarie Discipline; or the Young Artillery Man, Wherein is Discoursed and Shown the Postures, both of Musket and Pike, the exactest way, &c., Together with the Exercise of the Foot in their Motions, with much variety: As also, diverse and several Forms for the Imbatteling small or great Bodies demonstrated by the number of a single Company with their Reducements. Very necessary for all such as are Studious in the Art Military. Whereunto is also added the Postures and Beneficiall Use of the Halfe-Pike joyned with the Musket. With the way to draw up the Swedish Brigade.* By Colonel WILLIAM BARRIFFE. Barriffe was a Puritan, and added to his title-page: "Psalmes 144: 1. Blessed be the Lord my Strength which teacheth my hands to warre and my fingers to fight." Arthur Golding was in the service of the Protector Somerset, and was a voluminous translator.

Page 24. *Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden Priscilla.*

Among the names of the Mayflower company are those of "Mr. William Mullines and his wife, and 2 children, Joseph and Priscilla; and a servant, Robart Carter."

## Notes

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Page 29. *So he won the day, the battle of something-or-other.*

The account of this battle may be found in Cæsar's *Commentaries*, Book II. chapter 10.

Page 31. *She is alone in the world; her father  
and mother and brother  
Died in the winter together.*

"Mr. Molines, and his wife, his sone and his servant dyed the first winter. Only his daughter Priscilla survived." Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation*, p. 452.

Page 42. *So through the Plymouth woods John  
Alden went on his errand.*

The description of Alden's walk is, circumstantial, but in point of fact, a sense of danger led the Pilgrims, at first, to reside in close contiguity with each other.

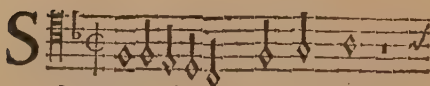
Page 44. *Singing the hundredth Psalm, the  
grand old Puritan anthem.*

The words in the version which Priscilla used sound somewhat rude to modern ears, but the music is substantially what we know as Old Hundred. Ainsworth became a Brownist in 1590, suffered persecution, and found refuge in Holland, where he published learned translations and commentaries. His version of Psalm C. is as follows:—

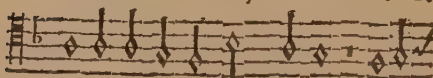
## Notes

AINSWORTH'S PSALM-BOOK.

### PSALME 100.



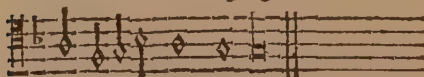
Howt to Iehovah, all the earth. 2.



Serve ye Iehovah with gladnes: before



him come with singing-m rth. Know



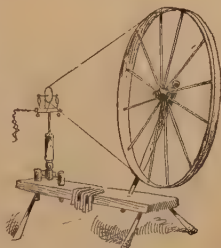
that Iehovah he God is:

1. Shout to Jehovah all the earth.
2. Serve ye Jehovah with gladness ; before him come with singing-mirth.
3. Know that Jehovah he God is. It's he that made us and not we, his flock and sheep of his feeding.
4. Oh, with confession enter ye his gates, his courtyard with praising. Confess to him, bless ye his name.
5. Because Jehovah he good is ; his mercy ever is the same, and his faith unto all ages.

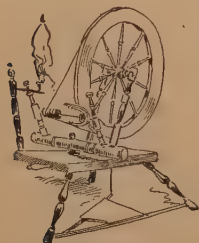
## Notes

Page 45. *Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like a snow-drift.*

Mr. Longfellow received a number of letters questioning his description of Priscilla's wheel, upon the ground that while she was spinning wool, the motions and apparatus were applicable only to flax. He examined the question carefully, especially with the aid of his friend Mr. Charles Folsom, and as a considerable number of authorities made it appear that wool was spun upon the small treadle-wheel in Germany and the Low



WOOL SPINNING-WHEEL.



FLAX SPINNING-WHEEL.

Countries, the lines were suffered to remain as they stood. Mr. Folsom suggested to the poet the following revision : —

Piled at her knee, her left hand  
feeding the ravenous spindle,  
While with her right hand she  
sped and stayed the wheel in  
its motion.



## Notes

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Page 53. *He was a gentleman born, could trace  
his pedigree plainly*

*Back to Hugh Standish of  
Duxbury Hall, in Lan-  
cashire, England.*



DUXBURY HALL, ENGLAND

“There are at this time in England two ancient families of the name, one of Standish Hall, and the other of Duxbury Park, both in Lancashire, who trace their descent from a common ancestor, Ralph de Standish, living in 1221. There seems always to have been a military spirit in the family. Froissart, relating in his *Chronicles* the memorable meeting between Richard II. and Wat Tyler, says that after the rebel was struck from his horse by William Walworth, ‘then a squyer of the kynges alyted, called Jōhn Standysshe, and he drewe out his sworde, and put into

## Notes

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Wat Tyler's belye, and so he dyed.' For this act Standish was knighted. In 1415 another Sir John Standish fought at the battle of Agincourt. From his giving the name of Duxbury to the town where he settled, near Plymouth, and calling his eldest son Alexander (a common name in the Standish family), I have no doubt that Miles was a scion from this ancient and warlike stock." (Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrims*, foot-note, p. 125.) In his will, Miles Standish gives to his "son and heir-apparent, Alexander Standish," certain lands, "given to me as right heir by lawful descent, but surreptitiously detained from me; my great grandfather being a second younger brother from the house of Standish of Standish." He removed to Duxbury about the year 1630, and died there October 3, 1656.

Page 62. *Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of Plymouth.*

In a letter written by Edward Winslow, December 11, 1621, just a year, therefore, after the landing, to a friend in England, he says: "You shall understand that in this little time that a few of us have been here, we have built seven dwelling-houses, and four for the use of the plantation." (Young's *Chronicles*, p. 230.)

## Notes

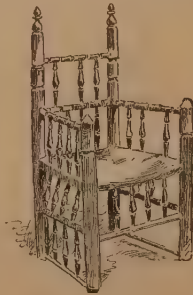
Page 65. *Only one of them old, the hill that  
was nearest to heaven,  
Covered with snow, but erect, the ex-  
cellent Elder of Plymouth.*

William Brewster was the ruling elder of the Pilgrim church. When the church had a minis-

ter to teach and administer the sacraments, such a pastor was aided by an officer

*William Brewster*

named the ruling elder, whose function was much the same as that of the deacon in Congregational churches at the present day. The teaching elder included ruling among his duties; the ruling elder sometimes taught in the absence of his superior; the teaching elder was maintained by the people; the ruling elder was not withdrawn from other occupations, and maintained himself.



ELDER BREWSTER'S CHAIR.

Brewster thus, as the ruling elder in the little Plymouth church, was also, in the absence of Robinson, their teacher. He was seventy-seven

## Notes

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or seventy-eight at the time of his death in 1644.



ELDER BREWSTER'S SWORD.

Page 66. *God had sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat for this planting.*

In Stoughton's Election Sermon of 1668 occurs the first use, apparently, of the oft-quoted phrase: "God sifted a whole nation that he might send choice grain over into this wilderness."

Page 66. *While on the table before them was lying unopened a Bible.*

The Genevan Bible, first printed in Geneva in 1560, was the favorite version of the Puritans, and was clung to long after the King James version had been issued. Owing to obstacles in England, the Bible was frequently printed on the continent; once, at any rate, at Amsterdam.

Page 66. *And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattlesnake glittered.*

As a matter of history, the meeting to which Standish was suddenly summoned took place

## Notes

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about the first of December, 1621, about two months after the date assigned by the poet to the wedding; the first recorded instance of the rattlesnake skin challenge was in January, 1622, when Tisquantum, the Indian, brought a defiance from Canonicus, who was of the tribe of Narragansetts, and not one of the Pecksuots, and the governor returned the skin stuffed with bullets. Holmes, in his *Annals* (i. 177), reminds the reader: "There is a remarkable coincidence in the form of this challenge given by the Scythian prince to Darius. Five arrows made a part of the present sent by his herald to the Persian king. The manner of declaring war by the Araucanian Indians of South America was by sending from town to town an arrow clinched in a dead man's hand."

Page 67. *Judging it wise and well that some  
at least were converted.*

The poet here uses the sentiment of John Robinson when he wrote to the colonists after the first encounter with the Indians: "Oh, how happy a thing had it been, if you had converted some before you had killed any!"

Page 80. *With Stephen and Richard and Gilbert.*

These names are not taken at random. Stephen

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Hopkins, Richard Warren, and Gilbert Winslow were all among the Mayflower passengers, and were alive at this time.

Page 85. *O strong hearts and true! not one  
went back in the Mayflower!*

*No, not one looked back, who had set  
his hand to this ploughing!*

The Mayflower sailed on her return voyage April 5, 1621, her stay through the winter being due, as Bradford explains, to the necessity of the Pilgrims for shelter while they were settling themselves, the bad weather, and the unwillingness of the captain to sail with a crew diminished by sickness and death, until the more inclement season was passed. "It is a circumstance worthy of notice, that, notwithstanding the hardships, privations, and mortality among the Pilgrims, not one of them was induced to abandon the enterprise and return home in the Mayflower. Young's *Chronicles*, note, p. 199.

Page 85. *Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and  
leaving far to the southward  
Island and cape of sand, and the Field  
of the First Encounter.*

The Gurnet, or Gurnet's Nose, is a headland connecting with Marshfield by a beach about seven miles long. On its southern extremity are

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two light-houses, which light the entrance to Plymouth Harbor.

“So after we had given God thanks for our deliverance, we took our shallop and went on our journey, and called this place ‘The First Encounter.’” Bradford and Winslow’s *Journal*, in Young’s *Chronicles*, p. 159. This place, on the Eastham shore, marked the spot where the Pilgrims had their first encounter with the Indians, December 8, 1620. A party under Miles Standish was exploring the country while the Mayflower was at anchor in Provincetown Harbor.

Page 97. *He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a moment.*

Hubbard, in his *History of New England*, speaks of Standish as a “small chimney soon fired.”

Page 102. *After a three days’ march he came to an Indian encampment.*

The poet apparently has taken his material for this expedition of Standish from the report of *Standish’s Expedition against the Indians of Weymouth, and the breaking up of Weston’s Colony at that place*, as given in Winslow’s *Relation*, reproduced in Young’s *Chronicles*, pp. 327-345. The historic incident took place in March, 1623, and the party went to the place where the combat took place in a shallop, and not on foot.

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Page 105. *Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his weapons about him.*

"Among the rest Wituwamat bragged of the excellency of his knife. On the end of the handle there was pictured a woman's face; 'but,' said he, 'I have another at home wherewith I have killed both French and English, and that hath a man's face on it, and by and by these two must marry.' Further, he said of that knife he there had, *Hinnaim namen, hinnaim michen, matta cuts*; that is to say, By and by it should see, and by and by it should eat, but not speak. Also Pecksuot, being a man of greater stature than the captain, told him, though he were a great captain, yet he was but a little man; and, said he, though I be no sachem, yet I am a man of great strength and courage." (Winslow's *Relation*.) In the historic scene, the combat took place within a lodge, here out of doors. The poet turns the whole incident of Standish's parley and killing of the Indian into a more open and brave piece of conduct than the chronicle permits us to see.

Page 110. *Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok, friend of the white man.*

"Hobbamock stood by all this time as a spectator, and meddled not, observing how our men demeaned themselves in this action. All being here ended, smiling, he brake forth into these speeches to the captain: 'Yesterday Pecksuot,



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bragging of his own strength and stature, said, though you were a great captain, yet you were but a little man; but to-day I see you are big enough to lay him on the ground.'” Winslow’s *Relation*.

Page 110. *And as a trophy of war the head of the brave Wattawamat  
Scowled from the roof of the fort,  
which at once was a church and a fortress.*

“Now was the Captain returned and received with joy, his head being brought to the fort and there set up.” (Winslow’s *Relation*.) The custom of exposing the heads of offenders in this way was familiar enough to the Plymouth people before they left England. As late as the year 1747 the heads of the lords who were concerned in the Scots’ Rebellion were set up over the Temple Bar in London.

Page 115. *Month after month passed away, and  
in Autumn the ships of the mer-  
chants  
Came with kindred and friends, with  
cattle and corn for the Pilgrims.*

The poet appears to take Standish’s return from his expedition as the date from which after events are measured. The *Anne* and the *Little James* came at the beginning of August, 1623.

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Page 116. *Latticed the windows were, and the  
window-panes were of paper,  
Oiled to admit the light, while wind  
and rain were excluded.*

When the *Fortune*, which visited the colony in November, 1621, returned to England, Edward Winslow sent by it a letter of advice to those who were thinking of emigrating to America, in which he says: "Bring paper and linseed oil for your windows." Even in the time of Henry VIII. glass windows were considered a luxury. When the Duke of Northumberland, in Elizabeth's time, left Alnwick Castle to come to London for the winter, the few glass windows which formed one of the luxuries of the castle were carefully taken out and laid away, perhaps carried to London to adorn the city residence.

Page 116. *Still may be seen to this day some  
trace of the well and the orchard.*

The Alden family still retain John Alden's homestead in Duxbury, and the present house is said to stand near the site of the one originally built there. In point of fact, however, Alden did not settle in Duxbury until 1631.

Page 117. *Raghorn, the snow-white bull, that  
had fallen to Alden's allotment.*

Bradford, in his *History of Plymouth Plantation*, p. 109, under date of 1624, says: "Shortly after [March] Mr. Winslow came over, and brought

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a pretty good supply, and the ship came on fishing, a thing fatal to this plantation. He brought 3 heifers and a bull, the first beginning of any cattle of that kind in y<sup>e</sup> land." The division of the cattle, according to the same authority, took place in 1627.

Page 119. *She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of Southampton.*

Bradford, in his list of passengers by the Mayflower, reports as follows of John Alden: "John Alden was hired for a cooper, at South-Hampton, wher the ship victuled; and being a hopfull young man, was much desired, but left to his owne liking to go or stay when he came here; but he stayed, and maryed here."

Page 130. *After the Puritan way, and the laudable custom of Holland.*

"May 12 [1621] was the first marriage in this place, which, according to the laudable custom of the Low-Cuntries, in which they had lived, was thought most requisite to be performed by the magistrate, as being a civill thing, upon which many questions about inheritances doe depende, with other things most proper to their cognizans, and most consonante to the scripturs, Ruth 4, and no wher found in the gospell to be layed on the ministers as a part of their office. . . . And this practiss hath continued amongst, not only them, but hath been followed by all the famous

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churches of Christ in these parts to this time,—Anno, 1646.” (Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, p. 62.) Miles Standish, it may be added, was not inconsolable. In the *Fortune* came a certain Barbara, whose last name is unknown, whom Standish married. He had six children, and many descendants are living. As is well known, the captain took up his home in Duxbury, where he must have had his rival for a neighbor. One tradition, however, reports that Standish never forgave Alden.













